

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

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June-July, 2025

Price 1¢

THE WORKS OF MERCY

FEED THE HUNGRY.
GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY.
CLOTHE THE NAKED
VISIT THE SICK +
SHELTER THE HOMELESS.
VISIT THE IMPRISONED.
BURY THE DEAD. PRAY
FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

Rita Corbin

Open the Ears of the World

By KATHY KELLY

"We were so close," Cassandra Dixon wrote from Malta where she had hoped to board Conscience, the aptly named Freedom Flotilla ship which two weaponized drones bombed on May 2nd, 2025, almost certainly launched by Israel. Cassandra had traveled to Malta after spending six weeks in Masafer Yatta, the West Bank region where she lived among villagers whom local Israeli settlers constantly persecuted.

In a blog post entitled "Hard Days in Masafer Yatta," Cassandra told of villagers stunned and bewildered by round after round of violent attacks. Vehicles torched, olive trees destroyed, wells poisoned. Settlers barged into homes, beating villagers who had been sound asleep. With their vehicles destroyed, villagers relied on a hostile Israeli military for transport to emergency rooms and intensive care units. The military would then arrest dozens of young villagers for indefinite detention without trial.

In a recent letter, Cassandra wrote about a man who lay on the ground bleeding, after attacking settlers wounded his leg. Soldiers chatted amiably with the settlers before finally arresting him, shackling him to a gurney and taking him to an Israeli hospital where a surgeon amputated his leg.

During a 2023 sojourn among villagers in the south Hebron hills, a settler fractured Cassandra's skull with a heavy stick. Not one to draw attention to herself, she persisted with a court case in hopes of building precedent to protect vulnerable Palestinians.

She and her companions aiming to reach Gaza insist on breaking the siege. Their effort to deliver food, fuel, medicine, tents, and water represents international sanity, a symbolic, challenging effort to nonviolently resist Israel's cruelty.

They long to reach Gaza's shore with supplies for victims of Israeli bombardment, knowing the victims' skin grafts will not heal without adequate nutrients. They want to help doctors in Gaza's hospitals to treat diabetes patients denied insulin by the Israeli blockade. They know the heart-wrenching consequences when hospitals lack cardiac catheters, blood pressure medicines, and potable water. They shudder when they hear reports of women fueling ovens with old sneakers, or Doctors Without Borders' assessments that Gaza's

main desalination plant now produces potable water at only ten percent of its former capacity.

"Choose life, that you and your descendants might live," (Deuteronomy 30:19), speaks to their deepest values. They have made their choice between the tools of humane, unarmed peacemakers and the shamelessly announced intentions of Israel's leadership.

"They need to starve," said Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu on May 6, 2025, speaking to the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*. "If there are civilians who fear for their lives, they should go through the emigration plan"—a term for ethnic cleansing into refugee tent cities.

"Whoever harms us will be harmed by us, sevenfold," Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a May 5th statement, vastly understating the brutal disproportionality of Israel's escalation of regional violence, and its seemingly eternal readiness to begin cycles of violence sacrificing the innocent for strategic advantage.

In fact, Mr. Katz is securing deepened isolation for Israel, a country now surrounded by populations it has remorselessly bombed and bullied. With nuclear weapons bunkered at the Negev desert's Shimon Peres Nuclear Research Center among other locations, Israel's defiance of international law incalculably intensifies the nuclear threat throughout its region and the world.

Now President Trump's lead envoy, Steve Witkoff, hints at an upcoming expansion of the Abraham Accords, a set of planned treaties between Israel and US-allied regional autocracies. The Abraham Accords are not a peace deal: they represent a confederacy of killers.

Pressing forward with the Abraham Accords will embolden Saudi Arabia to seek nuclear technology from the United States. So far, Mohammad bin Salman has refused cooperation with United Nations oversight agencies, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has assured the world that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia will also get them.

Why should countries that have sown havoc and suffering throughout the region be exalted as brokers of peace? The nations of the region and the world should be forging strong bonds to resist Israel's ethnic cleansing, halting all weapon shipments to Israel, and ending all trade with illegal Israeli settlement industries.

President Trump and Steven Witkoff understand real estate transactions. Bludgeoning opponents, in their undereducated views, will lead to success. Hence, it seems the Abraham Accords may soon expand to bring more dictatorships into overt complicity with Israel's bloodthirsty refusal to acknowl-

1913 Lockout in Dublin City

By KEVIN BYRNE

January 18th 2025 marked the 111th anniversary of the sad end of the 1913 Lockout, one of the most significant labor disputes in history. Dublin in 1913 was a faded city. Poverty was endemic and most workers were unskilled casual laborers who were paid by the day or even the hour, when they could get work. The city had the worst housing conditions in the United Kingdom—26,000 families lived in inner-city tenements and 20,000 of those lived in single rooms. Inadequate diet, poor housing and unsanitary conditions ensured that poor people were decimated by diseases like tuberculosis and typhoid. The child of a Dublin laborer was seventeen times more likely to die within a year and seven times more likely to die of tuberculosis than the child of a professional.

Since the city's purse strings were controlled by the British government and their Unionist supporters, Dublin corporations' and the Catholic Church's efforts to address poverty were severely constrained by scarce resources. However, although Dublin in 1913 was stifled by colonialism, sectarianism and crony capitalism, it was very much a city of struggle, strife and activism.

Jim Larkin established the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) in 1909,

which was so successful in raising wages that the Lord Mayor and the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin proposed a Conciliation Board for the city. However, this was pre-empted by the Catholic businessman and former Nationalist Member of Parliament, William Martin Murphy, who forced a showdown by dismissing employees suspected of ITGWU membership in all his businesses and persuading other employers to do the same. Thousands of workers were instructed to resign from the ITGWU or be dismissed. Tram workers responded with a strike on August 26th, which escalated rapidly as workers in other industries followed suit.

In the following months, police baton-charged workers protesting in Dublin's streets, killing two and injuring hundreds. The army was ordered to undertake strike-breaking duties, and magistrates imposed harsh prison sentences, fines and evictions on strikers while ignoring charges against strikebreakers. Larkin and James Connolly, a socialist labor leader, were both arrested and imprisoned at various times for sedition.

Throughout the Lockout, Archbishop Walsh tried to mediate between the opposing parties, but Murphy steadfastly refused to cooperate. And while Archbishop Walsh was actively promoting reconciliation initiatives, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul refused to aid strikers' families. While rebutting wild allegations of "red, anti-Catholic anarchy," Connolly pointed out that early Christianity was a religion of "slaves and laborers." Speaking to employers of the appalling living conditions of workers

(continued on page 5)

THE WORKS OF WAR

DESTROY CROPS AND
LAND SEIZE FOOD
SUPPLIES DESTROY
HOMES AND VILLAGES
SCATTER FAMILIES
CONTAMINATE WATER
IMPRISON DISSENTERS
INFLECT WOUNDS & BURNS
KILL THE LIVING

Rita Corbin

edge Palestinian human rights, including the right to live.

In contrast to the sluggish, dull response of the world's political leaders, I think of spiritual leader Pope Francis, who, before his death, asked that the specific Popemobile he had used to criss-cross Palestine during his final visit there be turned into a mobile health clinic.

Rev. John Dear tells us that when French peace activists sought Pope Francis' advice, a few years ago, he answered, "Start a revolution! Shake things up. The world is deaf. You have to open its ears."

Last spring, a worldwide student movement for Gaza led us closer and closer to conversion, turning away from greed and fear, extending the hand of friendship to those who are most in need, telling the truth to, and about, the

powerful, and exposing the sins of militarism.

Father Abraham, in the Bible had raised his arm, bearing a knife, to slay his son, Isaac. But an angel appeared to him, saying, "Do not lay a hand upon the boy." In Wilfrid Owen's interpretation of the story, the angel continues: "Behold, a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns; / Offer the ram of Pride instead."

This is the Abraham Accord that should be enacted, releasing all captives, making reparations for suffering caused, and vowing to end all wars. It is the accord we should obey, rejecting genocide and rejecting the ever-growing threat of nuclear annihilation so hungered for, it seems, throughout the governments of the West and its client states worldwide. It is the choice of life that our descendants might live. ✦

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PETER MAURIN FARM

By LARRY O'TOOLE

I arrived at Peter Maurin Farm at the end of April. Spring was unfolding in the Hudson Valley, the gray hills quickly changing into a cloak of bright green leaves. But spring in the Catskills is a back and forth affair, with warm sunny days punctuated by chilly rainy periods. The birthing of summer is never a straight path.

I came back to the farm for this growing season after living here thirty years ago. Because the farm is in serious need of help, and a series of personal losses has freed me from commitments, here I am. Besides the six elderly men who live at the white house, only Tom Cornell and his mom, Monica, are left after Tom Senior died in 2022. Ralph and Elsa left last summer due to age and infirmity.

Last fall, on a trip east to visit family, I stopped by to see the Cornells. It was a great visit, and I even helped plant the last garlic. Tom had a new vitality, feeling healthy after a debilitating heart issue, and the darkness of his father's death. Monica too, despite her long tenure at the farm, seemed energized by new beginnings.

Back in Chicago on New Year's, as I was mulling plans to be at Peter Maurin Farm for the season, I received a call from Tom with the news: Monica had brain cancer. Unsure what to do in the midst of this change, clarity came when I received a call from Monica in February—she was excited about me coming.

In my view, Monica has faced these major struggles with her fierce strength and good (and sometimes gallows) humor. And she seems to be doing reasonably well due to prayers, quality medical care and the daily support of family and friends.

I returned here this season to a very different reality than I had initially expected. Tom has been guiding Monica through the arduous process of treatment and care, with little energy for hospitality and maintaining fifty acres of land and buildings, let alone returning the farm to productivity. My role of support has been evolving with changing realities.

The big farming news is that we now have goats. Alvin, who has been here many years, had been keeping goats at the nearby farm where he works, but they needed them moved. They offered to help build a pen and enclosure, and the goats came to Peter Maurin Farm in late May. Alvin keeps his goats for those in his Jamaican community, and we are cautiously optimistic that his care and shepherding will keep the goats away from the vegetables.

Trevor is back this summer and has taken on the thankless job of sorting and getting rid of huge piles of garbage and scrap in and around the pole barn. He will also plant

some brassicas and hot peppers. Bobby G. has started mowing a little early despite the benefits of "no mow May" because the rainy weather has the grass growing very fast. And Sonny is back this year using the same small garden space. Dan will try to repeat his pepper growing near the house, despite his limited mobility.

In 1995, near the beginning of my farming odyssey, I spent the year here at Peter Maurin Farm. I had contacted the Cornells about participating in the community and using my then somewhat limited farming experience to help grow food. I was enthusiastic about a collective farming project and developing Peter Maurin's vision. Without going into detail, my experience was not anything like I had hoped.

I look back on that time, now with many years of farming and experience of being with marginalized people, and I'm not surprised. Farming is hard work, and farming sustainably is near impossible in the current cultural and economic paradigm. The destruction and ghettoization of rural communities has been well-documented. The self-appointed intelligencia have long been dismissive or contemptuous of rural people and those who work with their hands. Very few urban or suburban people appreciate how much attention it takes to be a good steward of land. Peter Maurin Farm and its residents reflect the difficulties of rural people everywhere.

In this context, the struggles of the farm itself seem ordinary, given the lack of people, buildings in desperate need of maintenance, repair and updating; structures built with more enthusiasm than skill, abandoned, unusable, slowly falling apart; dumpsters full of junk, overgrown thickets overtaking unmanaged land; tilled fields and gardens taken over by invasive weeds and rows of abandoned agricultural plastic breaking down in the soil; and broken machinery and vehicles scattered around waiting to be fixed or junked.

All this can seem overwhelming. But I know from much experience that the sustained effort of a few people and a supportive community can renew this place and restore its bounty. This farm has nurtured many souls, produced much food, and been a loving home and refuge to those who have lived here. The land here is beautiful. No one can be here for long and not be awestruck by the animals, woods, mountains and water.

Peter Maurin Farm began in 1979 after the closing of the farm at Tivoli. This land existed for millions of years before its first human inhabitants came, who used it for thousands of years before European successors owned it for hundreds. The Catholic Worker has been

Millions Of Small Things

By BRIAN TERRELL

"We still hold that nonviolent resistance is the only sane solution, and that we have to continue to make our voice heard until we are finally silenced—and even then, in jail or concentration camp, to express ourselves."
—Dorothy Day, 1940

When I arrived at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport on February 20th, my passport was flagged and I was informed that due to a previous arrest at Volkel Air Base, where a US Air Force squadron keeps twenty nuclear bombs ready to load onto Dutch planes in a NATO nuclear sharing arrangement, I was banned from entering Europe and would be immediately flown back to the United States. I explained to the immigration officer that I had an order from a German court to turn myself in to the prison at Wittlich on February 26th for a fifteen-day sentence for taking direct action in 2019 at Büchel, the German air base where there is a similar nuclear sharing relationship. After a short wait my passport was returned and I was waved through the queue to join my good friend Chris Danowski patiently waiting in the arrivals area to take me to Jeanette Noel Huis, the Catholic Worker in Amsterdam.

Before my surrender, I had a most pleasant few days with Dutch Catholic Workers. I spent part of the day after my arrival with an old friend, Abdulhai, whom I first met in Kabul, Afghanistan in 2009 on a delegation with Voices for Creative Nonviolence. It was a joy to reconnect with Abdulhai, who is living in a refugee camp and working at an Afghan restaurant in Rotterdam. Chris and Susan van der Hijden, who recently spent 115 days in prison herself, took me out for a night on the town in Amsterdam's old central city and a brisk walk at the beach at the North Sea. It was a blessing just to spend a few days in the rhythm of prayer and work and fun with the Jeanette Noel Huis community and their guests.

On February 22nd, it was an honor to join Dutch campaigners at an ecotage action at the Port of Amsterdam—a most moving liturgical direct action in solidarity with Colombian activists, removing stones from the railbed that carries coal taken from Colombia to burn in European powerplants.

On the 25th, Dutch Catholic Workers accompanied me on my way to prison. We were joined by other activists for a vigil at the Volkel Air Base, in solidarity with the Global Day of Action to Close Bases. More folks from around Germany met us at Büchel Air Base, the "scene of the crime," for another vigil in the pouring rain. The next morning, our small contingent picked up a few more souls at the prison gates, who sent me off to my "vigil behind bars" with prayers, embraces and the blast of a trumpet.

here for forty-five years.

In 1979 as they were winding down the farm at Tivoli Peggy Scherer wrote an article in *The Catholic Worker* titled "Our Farming Vision." She wrote, "people to run the place have not come...but all the other factors became overwhelming. Many have left...and basic physical maintenance has suffered...and our seeming failure to maintain the site." The answer was to leave the place and start something new. As they were contemplating a new place, which became Peter Maurin Farm she wrote of the vision: "We want to do some small scale farming, to try to feed ourselves, city and county with some good food...we want to try to offer a living example, one others would not find too overwhelming, or beyond their means." Hopefully this modest vision can be updated and nurtured at Peter Maurin Farm without leaving it behind.

Despite all the difficulties and trials I have experienced in decades of farming, I am still hopeful and pray that those who nurture the land be nurtured by all of us. Come to this farm to learn and help and pray and be changed.

Catholic Worker Frits ter Kuile had been imprisoned at Wittlich some years before and filled me in on what to expect. Wittlich is a high-security prison, and I had been informed that I would not be allowed to take any books with me. The chance that I took bringing my Bible paid off and it was the only book that I had during those fifteen days of almost unbroken solitude. Most prisoners at Wittlich have work assignments, attend classes or participate in sports, but for my short stay, a morning shower, an hour of exercise in the yard each day and Sunday Mass were the only times that I got out of my clean, spacious and comfortable cell with a large window with bars through which I could see the rooftops of the town over the wall and the Eifel mountains in the distance.

In the five years that passed since the international peace camp organized by Nuke-watch in the United States and the German anti-nuclear movement where Susan van der Hijden and Susan Crane of Redwood City, California and I took bolt cutters to the security fence protecting nuclear bombs at Büchel, the world had grown to be a far more dangerous place. The events of the weeks and days leading up to my incarceration did nothing to dispel real anxieties for the near future.

I had mixed feelings, then, about opting to pay a fee to have a television in my cell, but now it seems unthinkable not to have had access to the news from February 26th to March 12th, 2025! I had the news from CNN and from the English language programs of several European countries, as well as bureaus based in Beijing, Caracas, Istanbul and Doha to watch President Zelensky be scolded in the Oval Office on February 28th and to hear the international responses to President Trump's "America is Back" tirade before Congress on March 4th. As happy as I was to have a Bible, I found more challenge than comfort in its prophetic exhortations, reading it in the context of the times.

It was interesting to be a US citizen inmate in a European prison just as many Europeans are coming to realize that the United States is not the "reliable partner" they thought we were. What to do when a relationship goes sour and among the common property to deal with is a stash of nuclear weapons? It is a good and necessary thing that the malevolent influence of the United States outside its borders is waning but horrifying to hear European heads of state speak of massive rearming to replace the "umbrella of security" that they think that US nuclear weapons provided. When European leaders speak of massive rearmament, they are in effect calling for a moratorium on any real progress toward averting environmental catastrophe.

On January 16th, five weeks before I went to

All of us need to take on the responsibility of directly feeding, clothing and housing ourselves and others.

I just turned sixty-three and I am no longer a young man. I, like many, am distressed by the toxic and aggressive political culture that blames and targets the weak and vulnerable. I am anxious about a looming ecological catastrophe. But I find hope in the classical story of the *Odyssey*. As a young man Odysseus ventures out in a world not unlike ours, to make war and find fortune, to vanquish his foes and pillage their lands. He comes back alone after twenty years to find in his absence his own house despoiled, his wife barely hanging on, his son exiled and his servants abused. Odysseus eventually makes things right with the help of the gods, but the true hero of the story is his father, Laertes, who has survived the chaos by living in a hut outside the city, gardening and caring for plants. Odysseus finds his father, who is a king, wearing dirty and patched clothes living as a peasant. And he leaves us with the most hopeful image: an old man caring for a young tree. ✦

prison, US National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Undersecretary Jill Hruby, announced that the old B61 bombs in place at Büchel and other NATO bases in Europe since 1968 had been replaced with the new improved more flexible, more precise and easily deployable B61-12 bombs. The bombs presumably in place now at Büchel are just part of a \$1.7 trillion program extending the "lives" of and exercising "stewardship" over the US nuclear weapons stockpile.

Despite admitted security challenges, Hruby spoke glowingly of "the future of the nuclear security enterprise." "All is not gloom and doom" because, she said, "The new B61-12 gravity bombs are fully forward deployed, and we have increased NATO's visibility to our nuclear capabilities." "It has been the honor to serve as the NNSA Administrator, and a pleasure to observe the progress," said Jill Hruby on January 16th, "I am fond of saying that my proudest accomplishment is getting our mojo back in NNSA."

On January 20th, just four days after the NNSA got its mojo back, Donald Trump was inaugurated President of the United States and on his very first day Jill Hruby and more than 300 other NNSA employees lost their jobs. Most of them, but not Hruby, were rehired a few days later.

The mission of the US Strategic Command's Command and Control Facility, housed in a bunker outside Omaha, Nebraska is to "aid the president's nuclear response decision-making process, and, if called upon, deliver a decisive response in all domains." It was scary enough before (delivering "a decisive response in all domains" means the death of most species on this planet) but the thought of anyone aiding Donald Trump's "nuclear response decision-making process" is especially chilling at this moment.

On March 12th, Chris and Bernd Büscher of the Kana Soup Kitchen in Dortmund met me coming out of prison. The next day, I met Barath, another Afghan friend who had arrived in Germany with his family last December and is now in a refugee camp in Delbrück. I joined Barath, his mother, wife and two children as they broke their Ramadan fast with a traditional Afghan meal. From Delbrück, a visit with more old friends, Hanno and Gisela Paul in Bünde. Sunday evening March 16th, I gave a talk at the Kana Kitchen and the next evening, took part in a discussion with local activists at the Café Aufbruch in Dortmund. On the 18th, Chris brought me back to Amsterdam to fly home the next day.

My first visit to Germany was in October of 1983, a time referred to as the "long hot autumn," an exhilarating time when millions of Germans in solidarity with activists protesting around the globe took to the streets to protest the short-range Pershing II nuclear missiles then deployed by the US on trucks roaming the border between the capitalist West and the communist East. The Pershing program was successfully ended, and a few years later there was vast reduction of nuclear weapons that lasted until 2009. Today, profiteers and bureaucrats like Jill Hruby do not view the reduction of nuclear weapons of those decades as lifesaving progress toward a more peaceful and sustainable world to build upon, but as years of regrettable neglect and they have reason now to celebrate "the long-term future of the stockpile."

The need for a mass movement like the world saw back then could not be more urgent than it is today. I look with both fear and hope for one to arise. In the meantime, I know that mass movements are not made by people waiting for a mass movement to arrive. A mass movement is built by people joining with others to speak and act for peace the best they can in their circumstances and who are willing to risk apparent failure in their efforts.

Considering the enormity of the danger that the world is facing, do our small efforts, our protests and jailings make any difference? In our movements there is a false dichotomy, I think, between being faithful and being effective. "I'm convinced that if the world survives these dangerous times, it will be tens of millions of small things that do it," said the folk singer, Pete Seeger. Perhaps

the best, the most effective contribution we can make to save the planet will be for each of us to accomplish one or two of the tens of millions of small things that need to be done.

In this time of climate catastrophe, famine and pandemic, wasting resources to build nuclear weapons is an unspeakable crime and the conceit that they provide security is dangerously insane.

"The only solution is love," said Dorothy Day, echoing Jesus and the prophets. She also called nonviolent resistance "the only sane solution." I am growing to realize that these are two ways of saying the same thing.

We can no longer, in the world as it is, dismiss loving our neighbors and even our enemies as ourselves as a "counsel of perfection" or as a utopian, impractical, unreachable and dangerously sentimental ideal. Love, today, is the only truly pragmatic option. Albert Camus called realism "the art of taking into account both the present and the future," and it is clear that there is no realistic course open to humanity other than to lay down our weapons and learn to care for our planet and share its resources equitably with all. The alternative is the end of life as we know it.

I am grateful to all the friends whose prayers and solidarity went with me. I started the penitential season of Lent 2025 on Ash Wednesday in a German prison and to finished it on Good Friday at the nuclear test site as the Nevada Desert Experience ended its annual Sacred Peace Walk. ✦

Michael Walli 1948-2025

By PATRICK O'NEILL

When he took the witness stand to testify at his 2013 trial for breaking into the Y-12 Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility (HEUMF) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Michael Walli was asked to do a mic-check: "Testing, testing, testing, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John," Michael replied. A Catholic and a Vietnam War combat veteran, Michael had a colorful and long history of nonviolent civil disobedience in opposition to nuclear weapons and war.

Michael Robin Walli was born October 8th, 1948 in Menominee, Wisconsin, the youngest of Henry and Marion (nee Bomberry) Walli's fourteen children. He was discovered dead in his bed on the morning of April 16th, 2025 at the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House in Washington, DC, where he had lived off and on since 1987. Dorothy Day Catholic Worker community member Colleen McCarthy shared that Michael, who was seventy-six, had been in declining health, with problems associated with aging.

In an email announcement of Michael's death, Dorothy Day Catholic Worker community member and Colleen's husband Art Laffin said: "As we grieve his death, we give thanks to God for the great gift of Michael's life of faithfulness to Jesus and his untiring commitment to live and proclaim God's reign of love, justice and peace in resistance to a warmaking empire."

Michael had an unusual voice that made his articulation deliberate and strong. He didn't mince words, and he made his points with moral certainty and authority. Well read, Michael was a joy to talk to, creative, but unyieldingly firm. He adhered closely to Catholic teaching including a consistent ethic of life. His fidelity to a form of Catholic orthodoxy could ruffle the feathers of some of his more liberal Catholic friends. Michael remained nonplussed by it all.

Art Laffin said he and Michael were protesting at Dorothy Day House's weekly vigil at the Pentagon when they were approached by some members of "Pentagon Guest Services" who did not realize that Michael and Art were protesting. When they were asked if there was anything they could do for them, Michael's request was, "Could you install a porta-potty in the vigil site" because there were no restrooms nearby. "That was vintage Michael," Art said.

An avid gardener, Michael tended the Catholic Worker house's urban garden located in Northwest Washington, DC. Michael's Catholic Worker community member Kathy Boylan said Michael spent the day before he died working in the house garden planting sunflowers.

Michael was the consummate Catholic Worker. Service was at the heart of his life's work. At his memorial service several long-term members of the Dorothy Day community told story after story of Michael's selflessness. Michael's picking up litter on the street, giving toys to the children, never doing anything for himself were all mentioned. Sonya Umanzor cried as she recalled the kindness of Michael, a kindness so all encompassing Umanzor questioned whether Michael was even human, while others at the house repeated the word "angel" to describe Michael. "It's not nice to compare people with God," Umanzor said. "Michael doesn't live for himself. He lives for everybody. I was like 'Is this a human?' I know Michael, he's in Heaven, and I'm so happy because he is not sick anymore."



Brian Kavanagh

Kathy said Michael spent a lot of his personal savings to adorn three sides of Dorothy Day house's cyclone fences with professionally produced waterproof canvas banners with pithy quotes: "Let us not like the heathens say that might makes right."—Abraham Lincoln; "No money for nuclear weapons;" "Nationalism is the childhood disease of the human race. It is the measles of mankind;" "Nuclear weapons are of the spirit of Antichrist."—Albert Einstein; "Together we'll weather this storm" and "Nationalism is a false religion."

In her comments at the memorial service Kathy said that Michael enlisted in the army at age seventeen, saying later that he became "a terrorist for the US Government" when he joined. "Michael was arrested countless times, and he spent at least five years in jail and prison for his efforts," Kathy said.

In 2006, Michael participated in his first plowshares action in which he, Catholic Worker Greg Boertje-Obed and the late Fr. Carl Kabat dressed up as clowns. However, it was because of his role in the Y-12 plowshares that Michael gained national infamy. In his 2013 trial, once more alongside Greg and the late Sr. Megan Rice, Michael at various times referred to himself as homeless, a mystic, a missionary and a garlic farmer. In 2013, Michael was a recipient of the "Peacemaker of the Year Award" from Pax Christi Metro

Washington DC/Baltimore.

The trio, who called themselves the Transform Now Plowshares, garnered wide and in-depth media coverage for their bold break-in at a facility that was billed as "the Fort Knox of Uranium." Despite security that was said to include alarmed fencing and security cameras, the three cut through three fences undetected, reaching the inner sanctum of the plant, which contains the world's largest depository of weapons-grade uranium. Once inside, they chipped the building's structure with hammers and used spray paint and blood to mark the building with what one defense attorney called "Biblical graffiti," before lighting candles, breaking bread and awaiting arrest.

Paul Magno, who was the leader of the group's support team, said the building the trio got to is "the only facility the US has for storage of bomb-grade uranium and it holds 400 metric tons of it, enough to service 10,000 nuclear warheads. So the end of the world is all packed up nice and neatly right there and they got to the very building."

Paul said breathing problems related to a heart condition resulted in Sr. Megan taking frequent breaks as the group meandered to their target. "I've always had a sneaking suspicion that Michael might have carried her," Paul said, drawing a laugh at Michael's memorial. For their acts, which the prosecution called vandalism, the three were found guilty of depredation of government property and sabotage on May 8th, 2013 in Knoxville Federal District Court. The jury reached a verdict after just two and a half hours of deliberation.

With a deep devotion to his Catholic faith, especially the Blessed Mother, Michael offered the most colorful testimony of the trial. "I'm Catholic and I know that Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mother do not have an arsenal of any kind," he said. "Since Dorothy Day, the great prophet, and Martin Luther King Jr. both condemned nuclear weapons," Michael said he was merely following in their footsteps by acting at "the criminal site Y-12."

On the witness stand, Greg, who also served in the US Army, said the fact that the trio made it to the building that stores uranium "was very clearly a miracle. There's no other way that I could explain it." At their sentencing, Michael told the judge his actions at Y-12 did not constitute a violation of law, rather obedience to God's law. "I am a citizen of Heaven," he said. "We engaged in our lawful, missionary work at Y-12. I committed no crime. I have no remorse." Michael and Greg were given sentences of five years and two months each. Sr. Megan was given thirty-five months. The three were released in May of 2015 with time served after winning their federal appeal throwing out the sabotage conviction, which was responsible for their long sentences.

Sr. Carol Gilbert, who also lives at the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House, said Michael would sometimes refer to the death of Sr. Ardeth Platte, who also died in her sleep at Dorothy Day House in 2020, saying he wanted to die in his sleep like Sr. Ardeth. "You need to know that Michael was ready to go to God, and he was talking about it for a number of years," Sr. Carol said. "I said, 'Michael I don't know if you're going to be able to die like Ardeth.' Well, he was just granted his wish. Michael said he was sick of the empire, and he said 'I want to go home.'" ✦

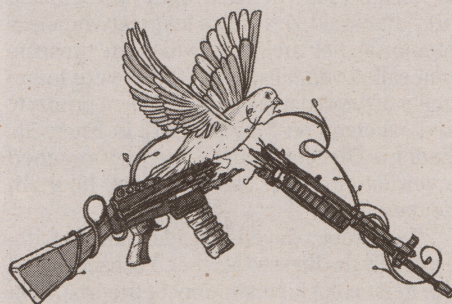


Ade Bethune

Memories of the Vietnam War Era: Fifty Years On

My own generation's war story was Vietnam. Every generation has one, its own war story—ours was built around the drafted army of young men necessary to pound boys into men on the anvil of political decisions. We see the same thing here today in 2024, minus the military draft but full of all the competing narratives around who is right, who is wrong.

Years ago I went to Vietnam for several trips with Habitat for Humanity. The trips were all memorable. The first, in 1997, went deeply into my body: Long An Province on the Mekong, the heat, the paddy fields, the water buffalo, the ducks herded by the young girl tending them in her long, silken skirts, the ancestors' graves right there in the fields, the bamboo roof, rough wood thatching the sides and mud floor of the family home we were replacing with a more sturdy brick dwelling. And our small band of volunteers from the United States there along with the knowledge that forty years ago, my country, my United States of America, had been bombing this very spot into oblivion.



WRL Logo

Cristy Road Carrera

I went to Vietnam two more times after that first experience. Each time there were male volunteers with the team who had either served with the military in Vietnam or who were resisters during that war. We all had some private connection to the war one way or another. Maybe a universal military draft made it so everyone knew someone who was being called up, so you had to make personal decisions about how you felt about the war.

Which leads me back to Vietnam and the second trip to another village also located on the Mekong. During a break in work, we had gathered with the extended family and neighborhood friends to introduce ourselves. Habitat always provided a translator plus the sharing of food and photos of family, and just working alongside one another had helped form a bond. There was one moment that gave me pause. Someone in our group asked a question of one of the older members of the extended family whose home we were helping to build. Long An Province had seen heavy fighting during the war. It was known that the military forces for the South Vietnamese Republic would come by day to the village and the Viet Cong (forces sympathetic to Ho Chi Minh) would come by night. The question asked by one of our group was, "So, how did you handle that; what did you do?" The older man looked at his questioner, smiled and said, "I hope you have a very happy life."

I have kept that answer in my heart, that cunning way of saying, "You know so little, America. I hope you never have to straddle that particular dilemma, my child." It was not lost on me by observation that that man, the elder, was a weaver of beautiful, graceful, tall bamboo baskets and that he was teaching his grandchildren the art.

Why is it that men are my teachers in this matter? I think simply because it has just been my historical context. I listened to my students. I researched and discovered my own family roots: my young Canadian uncle in World War I whose body was never recovered and lies somewhere, his bones in the farmland of Ypres, Belgium. My other uncle who made it back from World War II to die impoverished and suffering from what he remembered doing in the Philippines with a flame thrower. My childhood classmate whose name is engraved on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. My lived experience with co-workers in

the Catholic Worker Movement who refused military service and either went to jail or did alternative service and who, much later, encouraged me to join them in Vietnam to build homes.

Two more: A friend of mine, one of several who served jail time for draft refusal during the Vietnam War, told me this story. Besides doing anti-war work in those days, those of us who worked with the Catholic Worker in the mid-60s served the men and women of NYC's Bowery in a house of hospitality. The population of skid row during that time was mostly men and some women who had lived through the Great Depression and World War II. We were the kids in the house that Dorothy Day built and every day there would be a soup line and an evening meal for the folks who were part of the extended family of volunteers and Bowery regulars who either lived in the Catholic Worker apartments or sheltered in any of the Bowery flophouses.

Bob was one of the kids and had just received his notice to appear in a Minneapolis courthouse to be sentenced for refusing induction into the armed forces. There was no question that he would appear and then he'd be sent to jail, so he was saying good bye to us and talking with some of the men gathered around him who were regulars at the evening meal. He had gotten especially close to Russian Mike (most everyone had a moniker in those days indicating nationality or a personality trait). Russian Mike was very tall and wildly bearded and when he was drinking was more roar than menace but still formidable. He also had a perceptive and tender side, often making sure he procured an extra bag of Bugler tobacco when bags were distributed so his pals could all roll cigarettes as they huddled around the garbage can fires that would be regular warming stands on cold Bowery nights. "My brothers have need, Bobby," was his persuasive line.

Bob had explained to everyone his situation and that most resisters he knew were getting anywhere from two to three years of jail time, so he would not be seeing them all for awhile. After this news, Russian Mike took him aside for some extra counsel—words that have stayed with me ever since I heard Bob tell me this story.

I can see Russian Mike leaning in, just a bit taller than Bob. I can see Bob characteristically pushing back a lock of hair and adjusting his glasses. I can hear Mike's gravelly voice, "We'll miss you, Bobby, but try to think of it this way—it's a small price to pay for not having to kill a man."

Strangely, while writing about this conversation, I remembered some research I did years ago as I was working on a novel about World War I. I had discovered a book written in 1920 by Philip Gibbs, **Now It Can Be Told**. Gibbs was one of only five British journalists allowed to cover the trenches during that war. I read a good deal about that war, that suicide of nations as it has been referred to, and I remembered a passage Gibbs had written that I wanted to find. I went over to my bookcase and pulled the book, thinking it was a total needle in the haystack proposition to think I could locate that one passage in a five hundred page book but there were several slips of paper still stuck inside marking sections of importance. The first slip I turned to found me staring at the exact quote I wanted. Synchronicity or the Essay Angel, who knows? In any event, this was the scene that Gibbs reported after...well. After.

"Our men treated their prisoners, nearly always, after the blood of battle was out of their eyes, with a good-natured kindness that astonished the Germans themselves. I have seen them filling German water-bottles at considerable trouble, and the escorts, two or three to a big batch of men, were utterly trustful of them. 'Here, hold my rifle, Fritz,' said one of our men, getting down from a truck-train to greet a friend.

"An officer standing by took notice of this. 'Take your rifle back at once! Is that the way to guard your prisoners?' Our man

was astonished. 'Lor' bless you, sir, they want no guarding. They're glad to be took. They guard themselves.'"

The stories in this essay span a period of one hundred years. They are the reflections of ordinary men. I see the basket weaver in Vietnam. The bamboo strands weave in and out, in and out, the grandchildren sit on the floor watching him, the Mekong River flows peacefully before him. The stories are woven too after the blood of battle was out of their eyes and with mercy having a human heart and pity a human face.

—Nicole d'Entremont excerpted from "What Men Say" in *Alive to This*

I sometimes feel like the Vietnam War and I sort of grew up together. I was born in 1951, during the Korean Conflict, as that war was called, which means that I was three when the French were driven from Dien Bien Phu. I remember in elementary school reading, in one of those newspapers for children, about advisors being sent to Vietnam. It sounded like a wonderful thing to my young ears, grounded in post-WWII patriotism. Here we were, the greatest country in the world, sending assistance to this small nation struggling to protect its freedom.

I was in junior high school when the first Vietnam veteran I knew returned home, Lionel. Like many draftees at that time, when college deferments were allowed, Lionel was African American and far from affluent. He had almost legendary street status. In fact, most of us believed the stories that Lionel had to choose between jail and the military. And now Lionel was back from the war, standing straight and looking sharp in his dress uniform, quickly garnering respect and admiration from all.

Years later, I'd see a very different picture of returning Vietnam vets. But this was still the early Sixties and the worst of the war hadn't touched us yet. Through the middle Sixties, the war escalated and I began to hear different opinions and views of the war. In 1965, the year I graduated junior high, I saw young men on the news burning their draft cards at Union Square in New York City. Little did I know that some of those men would one day become my friends. I began to develop my own feelings concerning the war.

1968 was a pivotal year for the war, and for my understanding of it. The Tet Offensive began in January, and hostilities escalated from there. That spring I made my first visit to the Catholic Worker. In May, I saw photos of Catholic priests burning draft files. Philip and Daniel Berrigan, and seven others went into the draft board office in Catonsville, Maryland, removed draft files, took them to the parking lot and burned them with napalm they'd made. A black and white photo of the event went up on my bulletin board.

Later that year, I began attending St. Francis University in Pennsylvania and became involved in anti-war activities almost immediately. We boycotted classes in October, joining nearly two million people nationwide who were participating in the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam. We hosted teach-ins, and read the names of the US war dead on the college mall. The reading went on well into the night, so after the stage on the mall was disassembled, a smaller group of us went into the chapel to finish the long list of the dead. In November, we went to Washington, DC for the Moratorium March which attracted over 500,000 people. In December of the following year the draft lottery was held. I had been considering applying for conscientious objector status. My lottery number was 363, all but ensuring that I would not be drafted.

About this time, I began noticing more



Ade Bethune

returning veterans. They were a mixed lot. There was John, a slightly older, very serious student, who was friendly enough but preferred to be alone much of the time. A number of others drew close to the long-hair, hippie crowd. I never would have guessed some were combat vets if someone hadn't told me. And then there was Scott. Scott had seen combat and suffered some invisible wounds, with symptoms of what we now would recognize as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. One night, a bunch of students were sitting around talking, some getting high. The conversation shifted to an especially strong batch of LSD that had found its way on campus. A few students warned others to be aware when taking the drug, the fellow who was selling it among them. Then Scott burst in, asking to buy twelve tabs. The warnings were repeated but Scott, not paying any attention at all, swallowed all twelve at once right in front of us, then left as quickly as he'd come in. Students who played acoustic music used to rehearse in the stairwells. That's where, the next morning, we found Scott, vigorously strumming someone's guitar—he didn't really play the instrument—fingers bleeding and singing some caterwauling composition of his own making. Somehow, Scott survived the episode but he left school at the end of the semester.

I left school after two and a half years and would remain active in my opposition to the war until its end in 1975. Working in Newark, New Jersey, however, I also became interested in the struggles of African Americans in that city, and in labor issues. The shining image of the US that I'd been taught to accept as a kid was rapidly losing its luster.

THINK ONLY THAT GOD ORDAINS ALL AND WHERE THERE IS NO LOVE, PUT LOVE, AND YOU WILL FIND LOVE.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Rita Corbin

There is little, if any, good that comes from war, but I received one great gift due to the war in Vietnam. I first visited the Catholic Worker in 1968 on a public high school class trip. The Catholic Worker was on Chrystie Street, and I wasn't sure what to make of this place with these visibly poor, older men sitting around the room. An older woman, perhaps no older than I am now, spoke to us. That was Dorothy Day, of course. Near the end of her talk, most of which I can't remember now, she said that all of us young men should consider conscientious objection. My jaw dropped! I was raised Catholic and, at that time, had never heard anyone in the Church say anything about the war except that we were to support the troops and the war effort to stop the spread of atheistic communism. But here was this highly regarded Catholic woman encouraging us to consider conscientious objection. I subscribed to *The Catholic Worker* that day and have read every issue since. For the past twenty-two years, I've lived at St. Joseph House, and served as an associate editor and regular contributor to this paper. And, for me, that is a good thing.

—Jim Reagan

I'm sitting trying to put something on paper in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam War. What comes through my mind is watching the news at night and hearing the numbers of US soldiers killed in the war. And the number of North Vietnamese. After a while it felt like a recording of the sports scores except the Vietnamese death toll was always so much higher. And as it was a nightly ritual it lost its meaning. It just went on and on. And on.

And I remember the marches, the books, the rage, the fear, the sadness. The love. I came late to the peace movement, knocked off my horse by Dr. King's assassination. That gentle soul had a profound effect on my Christian faith and watching the news all night, I quickly began questioning war and our response to it.

I was in the Carmelite seminary, second year of college and we never spoke of Vietnam, so when I was asked to attend a workshop at Fordham, I chose Social Gospel. The facilitator walked in, there were but a dozen of us and he said, "My name is John Peter Grady and I am the chairman of the Catonsville Nine Defense Committee." He handed out pamphlets with the now familiar photo of Dan and Phil Berrigan holding lit matches above draft files. Good God almighty, he got my attention. He got my life.

Mostly and sadly, the war tore my father and I apart. I carry, to this day, a deep regret that I never sat down with him and tried to explain where my beliefs came from—largely he and my mother. I just announced that I was a conscientious objector and went about demonstrating and making noise, not bothering to listen to others or engaging in dialogue. When I received my conscientious objector status via the mail I have to believe he was secretly relieved but silent.

So fifty years later, my relationship with my father is what I recall most from the war. Two of us, two very different opinions, much stubbornness on both sides and a great deal of silence. And I realize this happened in a lot of households and actually typified the nation during that period. Two sides at odds with one another, each convinced they were right and refusing to give in or even discuss, much less come to an agreeable solution.

The years passed. The war ended, only to bring on new ones. A thaw developed between my father and me, and I became a father myself which brought me to reconcile with my dad. We became friends. The last words I spoke to him were "I love you." I honestly believe it was because of Vietnam, my experiences in opposing it and trying to find myself and most importantly, the influences I came under that brought me to that sacred place. I pray no father and son or mother or daughter ever has to go through that division but can find love for and reconciliation with each other.

—Bud Courtney

1913 Lockout in Dublin City

(continued from page 1)

in Europe's most church-going city, Larkin averred that "Christ will not be crucified in Dublin any longer by these men."

It is to everyone's shame that the welfare of innocent children became a battleground between Church and unions in 1913. Hundreds of Dublin families applied for the Dublin Kiddies' Scheme, devised by the suffragist and socialist, Dora Montefiore, who arranged to place strikers' starving children with sympathetic British families for short holidays. The first six children left Dublin without incident on October 20th but, although Montefiore had carefully coordinated with English Catholic authorities to ensure there would be no proselytizing, Archbishop Walsh condemned the scheme, publicly stating that any woman participating in it could no longer be considered a Catholic mother.

On the 22nd, a group of children were attacked at Tara Street Baths by a mob led by priests from the local church and members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). One volunteer, Lucille Rand, was arrested and charged with kidnapping and when Montefiore appeared in court as a witness on her behalf, she too was charged with kidnapping. Murphy's newspapers published the names of parents participating in the scheme, which they claimed was a plot to convert Catholic children. While the AOH publicly campaigned against the scheme on religious grounds, it implied that Montefiore was seeking to sell Irish children to foreign brothels and destroy the morals of working-class women, whom they believed would inevitably become promiscuous once relieved of responsibility for their children.

Clergy and AOH patrolled railway stations and ports to ensure that no children were smuggled out of the country. Larkin and Montefiore agreed to send the next batch of children to Catholic homes in Belfast, but they were prevented from boarding the train by an AOH mob. The AOH leader John Dillon Nugent declared, "We are patient with poverty; we are patient with the violation of our rights; but...we have no patience with them who would deprive the little ones of their faith." Later, another AOH mob led by Nugent and some priests attacked parents at Kingsbridge Station, but assault charges against Nugent and two priests were dropped.

Murphy, the AOH and local clergy successfully used the Kiddies' Scheme to drive a sectarian wedge between Larkin and Catholic Ireland. James Connolly who took over leadership of the ITGWU while Larkin was in prison, terminated the scheme, arguing that the money would be better spent on food in Dublin. The same day, Archbishop Walsh declared that his main objection to the scheme was that sending children to England would make them discontented "with the poor homes to which they will return sooner or later." The failure of the scheme seriously undermined the morale of striking workers who had to watch their children starve, and it was undoubtedly a significant factor in the gradual breakdown of workers' resistance and Murphy's victory in January 1914.

Murphy's victory however was ultimately a pyrrhic one. His reputation was destroyed and his many public works, business successes and political triumphs were forgotten after he died in 1919. Instead Murphyism became a synonym for greed, brutality and repression in Ireland. Although he broke the union in 1913, he could not destroy it, and the ITGWU went on to become Ireland's largest union. The Lockout engendered huge sympathy for Dublin workers and brought public recognition of organized labor as a legitimate actor in social and nationalist discourse.

Murphy's campaign against the workers also opened fissures in the broad nationalist movement for Home Rule. Ordinary voters were appalled by the Irish Party's passive collusion with Murphy's flagrant use of British instruments of repression against



Three Penny Opera

David Adams

fellow Irishmen, and the single-mindedness of Home Rule as the sole solution to Ireland's ills was shattered. Murphy's toxic coalition with the forces of imperial repression drove many moderate nationalists towards radical, non-constitutional action. Every signatory of the 1916 Proclamation sided with the Dublin workers in 1913. On the other hand, the actions of the Catholic clergy, particularly during the Kiddies' Scheme, confirmed some peoples' worst fears about the power of the Catholic Church in an independent Ireland and strengthened their resolve to resist Home Rule by every means possible.

The 1913 Lockout also placed the Irish working class at the center of the national struggle for independence. In response to police violence, Connolly and Larkin founded the Irish Citizen Army to defend workers, and its goal after 1913 became the establishment of an independent, socialist Irish nation. Although they never numbered more than 250 men, they were a driving force in the 1916 Rising and took a prominent role in Easter Week. The Lockout convinced Connolly of the need to prioritize a sovereign, independent Irish State and he moved to take center stage in planning the 1916 revolution. He was one of the signatories of the Proclamation of Independence, commanded the republican garrison in the General Post Office and was executed by firing squad on May 12th, 1916.

While these two foreign-born Irishmen, Larkin and Connolly, are rightly revered as heroes of the Irish revolution, their commitment was not just to Ireland, but to the common struggle of all oppressed peoples, in rich states or poor, in free states or colonies.

Between 1905 and 1910, Connolly sat on the executive board of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) and was an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the USA. He worked with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Mother Jones, the Wobblies' co-founder and organizer for the United Mine Workers, and in 1907 he formed the Irish Socialist Federation (ISF) to promote the SLP's message among Irish immigrants.

In 1908, the ISF affiliated with the Socialist Party of America, a broader coalition more tolerant of their revolutionary syndicalism. Even after his return to Ireland, Connolly remained committed to international action and in 1912, as a contribution to the "Socialist Poetry of the World" organized in New York City, he produced *Songs of Freedom*, a collection of his own compositions and other Irish revolutionary songs, including the iconic "Red Flag" written by Jim Connell.

Following Connolly's example, Larkin became involved with the labor movement in the US in 1914. He delivered a eulogy at Joe Hill's funeral in 1915 and was jailed in 1920 after being found guilty of criminal anarchy. He spent some years in Sing Sing prison, before he was eventually pardoned by the Governor of New York, Al Smith, in 1923 and deported. On his return, he again became involved in Irish socialism and formed the Workers' Union of Ireland. While Murphy in his lifetime only ever won one election (in 1885) and was twice rejected by the Dublin electorate, Larkin was elected to Parliament on three occasions, and when he died in 1947, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, presided at his funeral mass. ✚

From the Book of Notes

By RIC RHETOR

"A good columnist is never unintentionally tedious...." Can I get a witness? Truth to tell, I stole this opening salvo from **Financial Times** writer Tim Hartford, as he explains in his regular weekly writing, "Undercover Economist." It seems fitting for some of the entries in "The Book of Notes," since we're sure eyelids droop when reading a few tidbits herein, and somebody out there thinks we're intending to put people to sleep—better to read before bed type of stuff.

We're aware of our recent hiatuses, and although it gave the folks doing the work of putting out the paper a bit of a breather over the last month, at the same time, we miss telling our readers what the buzz is here. At any rate, in these up and coming months, we get the warm weather visitors who bring news of where they're from and add their buzz to ours. So, stay tuned and don't fret—the paper is not late—the June/July is here! The warmer weather might make you think we're all at the beach sunning and funning and picking the sand out from between our toes—nothing could be further from the truth!

Usually in this issue we recap our May Day anniversary celebration. Not too much different than other years—a good time was had by all. A younger mix of folks, students from Regis High School here in NYC joined us, thanks to Carla, who has been their mentor over the many months that they've been helping us out with a variety of chores around Maryhouse, as well as at St. Joe's. Good to see Esther Kennedy Finger schlepping May Day goodies to and fro, and serving and posing for a great pic with the aforementioned Regis guys behind the buffet table up in the auditorium. In the middle of that crew was the ever so delightful Elizabeth Walker, (mother of our May Day punch perfectionist, Amanda Dalosio) who carried out her deli food duties with as much youthful aplomb as the Regis boys and Brooklyn Latin's E.K.F.

Meanwhile Nelly and Madeleine worked the kitchen and cleaned upstairs, as things wound down, but not before The Filthy, Rotten System took the stage. And aren't we lucky when John Maynard blows out his signature "The Internationale" on the bagpipes as he makes his way toward the middle of the room!

And shame on us for not starting this section with our Feast Day Mass celebration before all else! Fr. Ray did the honors, at St. Joseph House, named for the patron saint of the Catholic Worker movement, the worker, the husband of Mary, the foster father of Jesus who, in the words of the late, beloved Jesuit from our parish, Father Walter Janer, "took care of his wife and his kid." St. Joseph the Worker, please pray for all in search of employment and decent affordable housing.

We welcomed a flyby visit from our West Coast friend Eric Martin, on his way to a retreat at Kirkridge. Eric is another victim of this latest repression being meted out at some of our institutions of higher learning for involvement in campus demonstrations against the current Israeli government's brutal

occupation of Gaza—in short, Eric was fired from his job at UCLA. He got arrested in a May Day 2024 demonstration on the campus and was accused of "insubordination" since he refused to cooperate with authorities who wanted to investigate faculty members involved in the witness. For the sake of all that is good and orderly, Eric has also been banned from the campus and not allowed contact with his former students. Carry it on, Eric, and thank you for your service to the cause of nonviolent struggle.

Martha got to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to visit with James Murphy and Renée Roden at the St. Martin de Porres Catholic Worker and spoke on Dorothy Day and Hope for the Jubilee Year at St. Francis of Assisi Church, across from the CW house. She's a great promoter of Dorothy's message of peace and justice and our special relationship to the poor in the CW movement.

Meanwhile, Cathy and Anthony D. and others, continue their witness across from the UN for a total ceasefire in Gaza. Mary Yelnick, a good friend and supporter of the CW is often a part of this small but sturdy band of peacemakers. At the writing the Vets for Peace are keeping a forty day fast for Gaza joined by so many including Kathy Kelly. So this is added to those other efforts for justice in Yemen, at Union Square or, at the Cathedral, or the one person peace demo that Felton does over at Tompkins Square. That's right: take it to the streets—let your light shine before all—but do it with kindness and mercy, inviting others to see your steadfast and compassionate witness for peace.

But we need to be mindful that the world will be saved by beauty. Nelly, Dan and Trevor went to the Whitney Museum of American Art to view "Selections from 1900 to 1965" and "Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe and the Last Gullah Islands" and other pieces of African-American art including Amy Sherald's portrait of Michelle Obama. There is so much to learn about our most forgotten peoples.

We are fortunate in NYC to have the chance to be exposed to the art and ardor of this splendid variety of the American mosaic. The great repository of African-American culture is the Schomburg Center but to have other displays breaking through the whiteness barrier of museums like the Whitney is a good step indeed. For Nelly, our third time around volunteer from Northern Italy, the day with Dan and Trevor was another step on her US cultural path. We hate to see her go back home but her thesis on incarceration and homeless life must be handed in.

Of course, this June-July issue brings with it some, by now, old news for readers in the form of the death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday, and the election of Pope Leo XIV. Of course a community like the CW, embedded in the philosophy of peace, justice and the Works of Mercy, will remain most grateful for the life of Pope Francis, the pope who acknowledged Dorothy Day's holy example in the halls of Congress. But we admire not only this, but his example to all of us about the care of the earth, the deep regard we must have for all peoples, especially the poor, the abandoned, the migrant risking all to come to a safer, more economically advantaged part of the world, but finding cruelty, hatred and utter poverty upon arrival. God bless you Pope Francis, and, of course, Dorothy Day for your witness to us all. And now, we welcome Pope Leo XIV, a good shepherd who greeted us with the words "Peace be with all of you, dearest brothers and sisters," reminding us that this was the greeting of the Risen Lord. He asks for our prayers, and we will continue to pray for him, hoping the journey he had with Pope Francis will continue and we will also continue in solidarity on this treacherous but beautiful road to holiness and peace. ✝



Shore Sentinels

Anna Hogan

FR. RON CIOFFI 1941-2025

By JIM REAGAN

Father Ron Cioffi, having just read the Gospel, closed his eyes and bowed his head, forearms resting on the small kitchen table that served as our altar. Then he began to speak, slowly, deliberately, softly but audible to everyone in the room, almost as if he was channeling the Holy Spirit Himself. Following his homily, Ron sat up straight in his chair, led us through our intercessions, and then through the rest of the Mass, as he'd done since long before I arrived at the Catholic Worker twenty-two years ago. On March 12th of this year Father Ron Cioffi died peacefully surrounded by his family.

Fr. Ron was born in Long Branch, New Jersey, on February 1, 1941, and graduated from Red Bank Catholic High School, a true son of the North Jersey shore. As a boy he worked in the family business, Harry's Luncheonette, which was a fixture in Long Branch's West End. I also lived in that part of New Jersey and can attest to the many colorful characters who inhabited West End and ate at Harry's. Going to Monmouth Park racetrack with his dad, Ron developed a lifelong love of horse racing. While serving as an altar boy at Holy Trinity Church, he first heard God's call to the priesthood.

Following high school, Ron attended St. Charles Seminary, coincidentally in Catonsville, Maryland, where the Berrigans and seven others would later burn draft files in the first draft board raid in 1967, and then St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore. He obtained a master's degree in pastoral counseling from Iona College, and a second master's degree in ecumenism from Princeton Theological Seminary. Fr. Ron was ordained in 1969, and served as parochial vicar at a number of parishes in the Trenton diocese. From 1977 to 1981, he served on the faculty of St. Mary's Seminary. Ron then served as parochial vicar and temporary administrator at St. Joseph Parish in Keyport, New Jersey. In 1989, he was named pastor, a position Ron would hold until he retired in 2016.

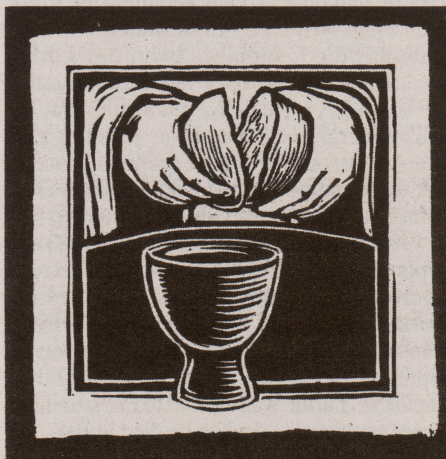
One of my favorite memories of Fr. Ron Cioffi is of him as the lifelong denizen of the Jersey Shore that he was. My mother loves the ocean. On days we were both free, we'd sometimes walk the boardwalk at Long Branch, looking out over the beach and the Atlantic. My mom was in her eighties at the time. My dad, who was no longer able to walk without a walker, would often remain in the car, taking in the salt air. One particularly beautiful day, we were walking the boardwalk, occasionally stopping to sit on one of the benches to catch our breath and stare out at the waves, surfers and swimmers. We rose from our bench and continued our leisurely stroll when I spied Fr. Ron, tanned and approaching us at a good pace. We exchanged greetings and I introduced

my Mom to Ron. He immediately turned his attention to her, and gave her a blessing on the spot. Inquiring about our family, he asked about my father. When Mom explained that he was sitting in the car, Ron insisted on walking with us until we reached Dad, and then Ron blessed him as well. Later that summer, Mom and I ran into Ron again and repeated the mini-ritual. My Mom remembers Fr. Ron fondly to this day.

Another warm memory speaks to Ron's love of the Catholic Worker, his generosity, and also to God's providence. On holidays we serve a special meal of eggs, ham, juice and donuts. This particular holiday we went to order a couple hundred donuts from our usual source, only to discover that they'd gone out of business. We were perplexed, unsure where we might be able to get so many donuts on such short notice. Later that same afternoon, Fr. Ron Cioffi drove up and told us that he had a car full of donuts that someone had donated, and wanted to know if we could use them. You can't make this stuff up.

Ron's friendship with the CW made perfect sense given Ron's commitment to social justice and peace, and how those values permeated his ministry. As pastor, he developed an active St. Vincent de Paul Society, a health ministry and a committee for parishioners to reach out to people in Haiti. In addition, Fr. Ron served as part-time director of the Diocesan Office of Social Concerns. He assumed an active role in promoting the Church's outreach to the LGBTQ+ community. When local merchants and others complained about day laborers, usually immigrants, gathering at train stations and other locales to wait for someone to come along and hire them, Ron made it known, and it made the local papers, that they were welcome to use the church parking lot. And let us not forget Ron's regular trips to New York City to deliver clothing that parishioners donated for us at the Catholic Worker.

Ron also recruited friends and parishioners to volunteer to help us. Sometimes he'd combine his trips with his love of the arts, making stops at the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Metropolitan Opera, again often accompanied by friends including Elizabeth, Joann and Fr. Tony, one of his closest friends, who also helped with Masses at the Catholic Worker. Ron would also show up in New York at presentations by Sr. Elizabeth Johnson or Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, again with a small entourage. All of these excursions, like so much of his life, reflected his strong belief that we are all called to share God's love, joy and peace with each other and the world. As Fr. Ron put it, "They are what He hopes for us and from us." Father Ron Cioffi, thank you for so much and rest in peace. ✝



Julie Lonneman

Time Out of the Ordinary

By JIM REAGAN

The longest season in the Church calendar sounds like nothing special at all. We know it as Ordinary Time. Among the liturgical seasons, we celebrate Advent in preparation for Christmas, and Lent for the Triduum and Easter. Ordinary Time, however, sort of stands alone, with no seasonal theme or message. Instead, during Ordinary Time we follow Jesus' ministry through the Gospels. In fact, our use of the word "ordinary" does not refer to a routine or mundane time but originally drew from the Latin, *ordo*, which means numbered. Throughout this holy period, we follow Jesus through week-to-week, sequential readings from the Gospel. We might remember that we were in Ordinary Time beginning back in January with the Sunday celebrating Jesus' Baptism. Eight weeks later, Lent and then Easter, preempted Ordinary Time. Now we're finally back again.

On our journey through the liturgical year, we put Easter Sunday in our rearview mirror back in April, and continued on through the fifty days that comprise the Easter season. During those fifty days we heard Gospel readings about the resurrected Jesus and his ministry, and even more about the apostles and the early Church from the **Acts of the Apostles**. I am always struck and consoled by how often the apostles failed to recognize the risen Christ, whether at the tomb, on the road to Emmaus or on the shore. The Easter season seems like a good time to exercise our own ability to see Christ in our lives, in our neighbors and especially in poor people. Dorothy Day wrote, "Those who cannot see Christ in the poor are atheists indeed." I must confess that, try as I may, I do not see the face of Christ in every poor person I encounter, though I know and deeply trust that Christ is present in them.

Forty days after Easter Sunday we celebrate Jesus' ascension into heaven. Most dioceses in the US celebrate the Ascension on the Seventh Sunday of Easter, but here in the Diocese of New York, we, along with archdioceses and dioceses within the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Omaha and Philadelphia, still celebrate it on the Thursday, forty days after Easter. A week after the Ascension, or after the Seventh Sunday of Easter in our case, is Pentecost Sunday, probably my favorite feast in the entire liturgical calendar. On the Feast of Pentecost, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on us, on all of the Church, laity and clergy alike, or as Gustavo Gutiérrez put it, "we celebrate the power of the Spirit in the Church of Christ."

According to the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are "wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of God. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.... The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: 'charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.'"

Fr. Gutiérrez describes the terror the disciples felt after the crucifixion of Jesus, and their hiding away behind locked doors. Gutiérrez then reminds us of Jesus' appearance when he wishes them *shalom*, peace, which Gutiérrez defines as "integrity of life...." Jesus tells them that they are to continue his ministry, the very one that caused Him to be arrested, unjustly tried and tortured to death. Again Fr. Gutiérrez: "The Lord asks them to have the courage to announce the Gospel without worrying about the resistance and hostility they are to encounter. They will be able to do that only by receiving the power of the Spirit, the Spirit of love, the antithesis of fear.... The presence of the Spirit in the church, in each one of us, must lead us to defend the dignity of God's children whose rights to life and truth are being violated. Becoming paralyzed with fear of the powerful or of losing our comfort and privileges in society means that we refuse

to receive the Spirit of love."

If we think about the liturgical year, it makes sense that Pentecost would immediately precede Ordinary Time, for without the Holy Spirit we would be unable to accept Her gifts, and live the lessons we learned through our Advent, Christmas, Lenten and Easter reflections. This is the same Spirit that allows us to know, without seeing, that Christ is present, not only in our neighbors, but in all things, in every interaction, every thought, every moment of our lives. Over the past year, my reflections during the more celebrated liturgical seasons have all seemed to echo a simple phrase: "Pay Attention!" You may be tempted to inquire, pay attention to what? But that would miss the point, because I think what I'm being asked to do is to simply pay attention in this moment, to take time to know that Christ is present in and around me right now and always.

Scripture asserts this reality again and again. In **John 14:20**, Jesus states, "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." In **John 17:23**, He prays, "I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity." Julian of Norwich put it this way: "And I saw no difference between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God; and still my understanding accepted that our substance is in God, that is to say that God is God, and our substance is a creature in God"

If we believe and accept this truth, suddenly no time is ordinary, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that God is present in the most ordinary moments of our lives. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops addresses Ordinary Time: "The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time... take us through the life of Christ. This is the time of conversion. This is living the life of Christ. Ordinary Time is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ."

US Catholic declares, "The richness of Ordinary Time is found in the opportunity to know Christ more intimately in the everyday realities of life. The Gospel readings proclaimed on these Sundays reveal the teaching and healing and mission of Christ, allowing us to better understand God who became human. We learn that Christ is about humility rather than pride, vulnerability rather than power. We learn that Christ is about including the excluded, eating with social and religious outcasts, and dismantling structures of sin and injustice. We learn that Christ is about self-giving love that is only possible through authentic relationship. Ordinary Time is anything but monotonous. It is a time of conversion where we grow into who we are called to be by imitating the lived reality of Jesus."

All this talk of the ordinary brings to mind St. Thérèse and her Little Way. Thérèse, a favorite of Dorothy Day, who penned a biography of the saint, wrote that we are to do small things with great love, that holiness can be present in our smallest acts and interactions. Zen Buddhists have a saying, "Chop wood, carry water," reminding us of the importance of focusing on the present moment, even in the most mundane chores of our everyday lives. They also speak of 10,000 ways to be the Buddha, alluding to the fact that we can find enlightenment, or in our case holiness, in any of the many diverse experiences of our lives.

About fifteen years ago, a seminarian from the Cleveland diocese came to stay with us for a few months. We shared a room during his visit, and sometimes in the evening we'd speak of our spiritual lives, and the joys and challenges we face. He was originally from Korea, and raised as a Buddhist. We spoke of parallels between the two traditions, between the Little Way and Buddhist teaching, and how living at a House of Hospitality provides a space for us to try to bring Christ's love into every interaction with others. When he left, and I am sorry I can't recall the man's name, he left two gifts for us — two wooden plaques

with Korean letters carved into them. One read "Welcome" in Korean and the other, which he presented to me because of our discussions, read "10,000 Ways to Be the Buddha." Most of those ways are quite ordinary. ❖



Candlelight AIDS Vigil

Fr. William Hart McNichols

BOOK REVIEW

ALL MY EYES SEE: The Artistic Vocation of Fr. William Hart McNichols by William Hart McNichols and Christopher Pramuk. Orbis Books, Ossining, New York, 2024. Reviewed by Jim Robinson.

This book offers intimate access into the life and work of Fr. William Hart McNichols an iconic artist, priest and poet. It is a dialogue between two close friends: Fr. Bill McNichols and theologian Chris Pramuk. This conversation unfolds in three key movements. The first focuses on Fr. Bill's childhood and his entrance into religious life; the second focuses on his vocation as an illustrator, AIDS hospice minister, and priest; and the third focuses on his work as a painter and iconographer. The richness of this conversation is accompanied by a visual feast of drawings, paintings, photographs, and icons, as well as a selection of Fr. Bill's poems.

All My Eyes See offers a deeply personal and vulnerable account of Fr. Bill's life, spirituality and artistic process. Much of Fr. Bill's art confronts the viewer as the fruit of his attunement to the eternal reality of beauty, the profound brokenness of our world, and the endless ways in which beauty and brokenness intersect (in faces, in memories, in the lives of the saints). In his foreword, Robert Ellsberg suggests that, "The beauty that Bill depicts is the vulnerability of a poor child born in a stable, worshipped by shepherds, while soldiers of the king seek to do him violence." Mirabai Starr has described Fr. Bill's art as a force that functions to "[bring] Nativity into the Apocalypse."

Fr. Bill began depicting the broken beauty of the world as a child, with his first experiments in artistic expression. Encouraged to draw by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, he found himself drawing crucifixion scenes as early as the age of five. Around this time, he was given a collection of books called **Little Lives of the Saints**, which introduced him to the community of holy beings whom he would pray to, connect with, and lovingly portray throughout his life.

Around this time, he was struck by the self-evident nature of his priestly vocation. "I didn't think about being a priest," he writes, "I knew that I was one." In a similar fashion, at the age of nine or ten, he became aware of the self-evident nature of his sexuality. He writes, "Some people want to be subversive; they try to be subversive. For gay people, just being born, just being alive, is already subversive."

Fr. Bill's subversive path, including his priestly and artistic calling, emerged within a context thick with American politics. He was born in Denver, Colorado in 1949, and raised by a family that was immersed in the political realm. His grandfather served as Denver city auditor, his uncle served as mayor, and his

father was elected governor of Colorado in 1957.

Fr. Bill entered Regis Jesuit High School, where he was steeped in Ignatian spirituality and the Society of Jesus. By his senior year, he was struck by his calling to seek ordination. Soon after, he entered the novitiate. He found St. Ignatius to be his "spiritual father," and he continues to remain confident that "I can go anywhere and I'll still be his." He wears a medal of St. Ignatius from Loyola, Spain around his neck, conveying his enduring ties to the Ignatian lineage.

Soon after his ordination in 1979, he began to celebrate Mass with Dignity, an organization serving LGBTQIA+ Catholics and their allies. In 1983, he celebrated the first Mass for people suffering from AIDS. Throughout these years, he had entered sensitively and deeply into the work of ministering to AIDS patients and accompanying them through the process of dying. During the day he found himself "facing the very painful, very frightening deaths of young people," and at night he would return home to illustrate children's books and to paint.

One of the most striking paintings from this period is *The Epiphany: Wise Men Bring Gifts to the Child*. Here, he depicts St. Francis of Assisi and St. Aloysius Gonzaga carrying two AIDS patients to the child Jesus, who is cradled by Mary. Jesus nearly leaps from his mother's arms in order to lovingly receive the emaciated man carried by St. Francis. Fr. Bill notes that this man was based on Robert, one of the first AIDS patients he visited as a hospice chaplain.

Reflecting on the intention behind this painting, he invokes the image of the arrow in Christian art, and the idea that God or an angel shoots an arrow of love into one's heart. The divine arrow transforms hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, piercing rigidity and making a space for gentleness and warmth. "It came to me that God was calling me to become an archer in my work," he writes. "I would pretend that I was taking the image and shooting it into the heart of the church."

Throughout **All My Eyes See** we are invited into Fr. Bill's myriad efforts at spiritual and artistic archery, from the illustrations and paintings that he produced during his AIDS ministry in New York City, to the images and icons he has produced after studying under Robert Lentz in New Mexico. It is appropriate that the form of this book is a dialogue, as Fr. Bill's personal and artistic journey has been rooted in relationality. His art has emerged from a wide and deep web of friendship.

For instance, beginning in 1984, Fr. Bill lived in community with Dan Berrigan on 98th Street. Through his friendship with Dan, he connected with Phil Berrigan, Liz McAlister, and a wider community of peacemaking resistors. He gifted his icon, *The Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, to Phil and Liz, so that they could display it at Jonah House. The icon depicts Mary standing before the red and black mushroom cloud of nuclear war.

As Phil Berrigan was on his deathbed, Fr. Bill joined a small group of close friends and family members in keeping vigil. He spent days painting the coffin which Jerry Berrigan built for his father. He recalls Phil's burial on the evening of December 6, 2002, as "a magical, mythical burial, almost like King Arthur was being buried. It was winter and everyone came out with torches in the night.... We stood in the dark with these burning torches, remembering Phil." To commemorate Phil's life and legacy, he painted Holy Prophet Philip Berrigan, which pictures Phil holding a Bible in his shackled hands, standing before a blood red sky. After Dan's death in 2016, he painted Holy Prophet Daniel Berrigan, which depicts Dan holding the child Jesus. The icon is accompanied by a quote from **The Trial of the Catonsville Nine**, including the line "We say: killing is disorder, life and gentleness and community and unselfishness is the only order we recognize."

Fr. Bill has described the generative power of icons by stating, "what you gaze upon, you become." May we gaze upon the cloud of witnesses through his work. May that gazing pierce our hearts like a divine arrow, opening us up to a deeper sense of solidarity with our beautiful and wounded world. ❖

BOOK REVIEW

HOPE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Pope Francis, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, with Carlo Musso. Translated from the Italian by Richard Dixon. Random House, New York, New York 2025. Reviewed by Bill Griffin.

Pope Francis, who died in April, was writing this book over the last six years and planned for its publication after his death. However, in 2025 he declared a Jubilee Year in the Church with the theme "Pilgrims of Hope" and since these writings are suffused with so many reflections on the virtue of hope, he decided on its publication at the start of this year.

The first of many discussions of hope appears in his introduction: "Hope is above all the virtue of movement and the engine of change. It's the tension that brings together memory and utopia to truly build the dreams that await us. And if a dream fades, we need to go back and dream it again, in new forms, drawing with hope from the embers of memory. We Christians must know that hope doesn't deceive and doesn't disappoint. All is born to blossom in an eternal springtime. In the end we will say only: I don't recall anything in which You are not there."

There was an abundance of movement, change, tension and faded dreams in the immigrant Bergoglio family's odyssey from Genoa, Italy to Buenos Aires, Argentina in the early 20th century. In 1927 one grandfather's family had to cancel sailing on the SS *Principessa Mafalda* at the very last minute. That ship's engine room exploded just short of its destination and the vessel sank suddenly in the night. Over six hundred Italian immigrants, whole families from the Piedmont region, drowned. The disaster was called "The Italian Titanic." Then, there was the worldwide economic collapse of the 1930s.

Such events explain, in part, Pope Francis's visceral connection to the miserable plight of so many immigrants today. Thousands of immigrants from Africa and Central and South America, escaping from wars and economic hardships, have perished both in the Mediterranean Sea trying to get to Europe or in the deserts along our southern border, trying to get to the US. The anti-immigrant prejudices of wealthy Europeans and US Americans is a scandalous sin to Pope Francis. His very first outreach toward immigrants, to highlight our moral responsibilities to them, was to visit the immigrant detention center on the island of Lampedusa in 2013. He made repeated visits to support the rights of immigrants throughout his papacy. The prosperous developed world has yet to take up its responsibilities, to its shame. Our current demagogic president's policy of unconstitutional mass deportations, without due process, is the sort of policy about which Pope Francis would, in all likelihood, feel deep shame.

Pope Francis avows that he is grateful that he has been able to feel shame. He writes, "If I consider what is the greatest gift that I desire from the Lord, and have experienced it, it is the gift of shame. My life is described in those final verses of chapter sixteen of the *Book of Ezekiel* (16:62-63). 'For I will establish my covenant with you, that you may know that I am the Lord... that you may remember and be ashamed.'"

This consciousness of shame is related to one of the most tragic and difficult periods in his life. He describes in the chapter entitled, "They Feed Upon My People As They Feed Upon Bread." (*Psalm* 14:4) the singular depths of the spiritual darkness he went through. It was during the time of La Guerra Sucia (the Dirty War) in Argentina which went on from 1976 to 1983. That poor land had become a battlefield in the long Cold War confrontation between the US and what was at the time the Soviet Union. To summarize briefly, economic underdevelopment stemming from deep social inequality, injustice and exploitation

had plunged the poor people of Argentina into terrible living and working conditions. Social unrest led to violence and finally, to a right-wing authoritarian military dictatorship, a junta supported by the US which had recently helped overthrow the democratic government in Chile in 1973.

During its hold on power the military dictatorship was particularly brutal. It kidnapped, tortured and disappeared approximately thirty thousand political opponents, mostly students and labor organizers. Many Catholic priests and religious who were working and ministering in the numerous *villas miserias* (shantytowns) were also killed. This was because Catholic Liberation Theology, with its thesis that a "preferential option for the poor" is at the core of the Gospels, was targeted as an ideological enemy to be eradicated.

Pope Francis, as provincial of the Jesuit order, responsible for many priests and seminarians, was in the thick of these terrible times. He writes movingly of his former chemistry professor, Esther Ballestrina de Careaga. She was a Marxist and an advocate for the poor and became the prominent leader of Las Madres de La Plaza de Mayo. This was an organization of mothers and grandmothers who gathered publicly to protest the disappearance of their children and grandchildren. This group was one of many grassroots efforts which led to the eventual downfall of the dictatorship.

Tragically, Pope Francis's very close friend, Esther was one of the many victims of the junta. He has always kept a photograph of this remarkable teacher on the wall of any office he uses. He writes about how he would argue with her when he was a young Jesuit and her student that "the communists stole the flag from us because the flag of the poor is Christian.... [C]hapter 25 of *Matthew*, the record on which we will be judged, comes long before Lenin." Nonetheless, what comes through most clearly to readers is the deep sense of failure and shame in not having been able to save the life of his friend. Here are his own words: "Those were terrible years, and also years of enormous stress transporting people in secret through roadblocks in the Campo de Mayo district, people whose lives and safety depended on it...but there were emotional situations that were extremely hard to cope with. For nearly a year I was given a hand by a psychiatrist, a very wise and capable Jewish woman who was already helping me read the psychological tests of the seminarians. I went to her once a week, and her suggestions were always helpful. I still remember them and find them instructive today."

Such experiences profoundly shaped the spirituality of Pope Francis and made him one of the most eloquent opponents of war and military violence in the world. In the last years of his papacy he was speaking out forcefully on our current world situation as being extremely dire. We were, in his words, in the midst of "a Third World War in pieces." The situations in Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, Russia and South Sudan, to speak only of the most prominent in the media, are threats to the peace of the whole planet. In his chapter, "The Scandal of Peace" he states that fully one-third of the world's nations are involved in war.

He gives special attention to what is taking place in Gaza, inviting and listening to people from all sides. Here is the account of one heart-wrenching encounter: "I met the fathers of two adolescent girls, an Israeli and a Palestinian who had lost their daughters because of the war, one a girl of fifteen, the victim of a bomb attack, the other of ten, killed by a soldier outside her school, and I saw an identical grief and the same resolve, to bury hatred in search of another path so that their grief would not be in vain. These two men, these two fathers who had experienced the same crucifixion have become friends, bearing witness that another world is possible—indeed, the only world possible."

By way of conclusion I want to bring up briefly the pastoral initiative by Pope Francis which has been controversial and to which he devotes considerable attention in this book. Even in short quotations his sincerity and determination will be apparent. His approach to the Catholic faith, he affirms, is based on a position of "receptiveness and certainly not

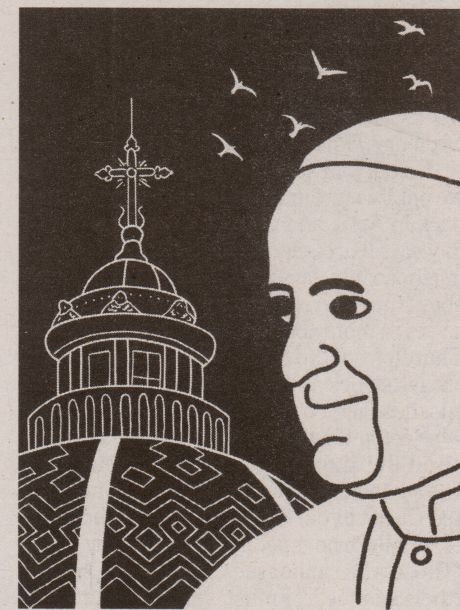
relativism." Under his direction this led to the declaration of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith on the blessing of couples who live in irregular situations in 2023. Pope Francis writes the following about this new step: "It is the persons who are blessed, not the relationships. It arises from the wish not to ascribe one situation or one condition to the entire life of those who seek to be illuminated and accompanied with a blessing. Everyone in the Church is invited, including people who are divorced, including people who are homosexual, including people who are transgender.... More the sixty countries in the world treat homosexuals and transsexuals as criminals, a dozen or so with the death penalty which is sometimes carried out. But homosexuality is not a crime, it is a human fact, and the Church and Christians cannot remain indifferent in the face of this criminal injustice, nor can they respond faint-heartedly. They are not 'children of a lesser god.' God the Father loves them with the same unconditional love. He loves them as they are and He accompanies them in the same way He does with all of us; being close by, merciful and tender. If the Lord says everyone, who am I to exclude anybody?"

At the same time the Pope expresses some critical reservations, writing as follows: "But if God loves us in our humanity and our differences, any ideological colonization is extremely dangerous, such as gender theory that seeks to cancel differences on the pretext of making everyone equal." Furthermore, he emphasizes the point that the theological developments in these matters were made together with the people of God and the College of Cardinals: "The most difficult, the most burning decisions have been made after consultation and reflection, through a spirit of synodality. Steps shared are steps that are safe, gradual, irreversible."

This is the autobiography of a remarkable human being who spent his life caring for oth-

ers, not in a sentimental way, but in the most honest way he knew how, through prayer, action and humility. The forging and re-forging of existential hope was the fundamental task. Hope profoundly informed his Christian faith and helped him envision a better, more just and peaceful future, for all of humanity under God's loving care.

He had a special liking for Charles Péguy's personification of Hope as the physically smallest, more unprepossessing but most important of the three sister virtues. In his poem, *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*, Péguy wrote, "Hope is a little girl, nothing at all... She alone, carrying the others." It is she, Hope, "who carries them all./Because Faith sees only what is. But she sees what will be./Charity loves only what is. But she, she loves what will be." ✚



Buenos Aires

Amy Shaw

Pope Francis: Love Over Fear

By GEORGE CASSIDY PAYNE

We live in a world splintered by fear. Nations are polarized. Communities are strained. Even families feel the weight of division. The loudest voices are often the harshest, and the quiet wisdom of mercy is drowned out by suspicion and rage. In such a moment, it's hard to believe that any one person could be a force for healing, let alone a global religious figure navigating the crosswinds of politics, doctrine and human suffering. But Pope Francis was.

Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio on December 17th, 1936, he entered a world on the edge of chaos. Fascism was on the rise. Dictators were gaining ground. Sovereign nations were being invaded. Economies were crumbling. Faith in democracy—and in each other—was fading. On Easter Monday, April 21st, 2025, he left this world. And once again, we find ourselves in a time that feels eerily familiar.

Autocracy is no longer an abstraction. Even here, in the supposed citadel of liberty, our institutions feel fragile, our principles vulnerable. No system seems immune. No moral compass seems fixed. The disorientation is real. When Jorge was born, he could do nothing about the state of the world. Now that he is gone, he can no longer help us confront it.

But while he lived, he helped. He helped by showing up—not for photo ops, but for people. He visited the poor, the blind, the sick and the brokenhearted. He stood beside orphans, war victims, the mentally ill and the imprisoned. He washed the feet of the marginalized. He prayed in silence at sites of unspeakable violence. He offered comfort, not condemnation.

He never let his title eclipse his purpose. He spoke truth to power—but also to his own Church, challenging its rigidity, calling it to remember the Gospel's radical tenderness. He reminded the institution to open its doors not just to the familiar, but to the forgotten.

When he became Pope—the first from Latin America, the first Jesuit, the first to take the name Francis—it felt like a dove had landed on the roof of the Sistine Chapel. From his

first appearance on the balcony in St. Peter's Square, asking for the people's blessing before giving his own, something had changed.

He did not lead with dominance, but with discernment. He was humble, but never weak. Courageous, but never cruel. Intelligent, but never arrogant. And through that rare blend of virtues, he rekindled something the world was close to forgetting: the moral imagination.

Francis reminded us that humility without courage is cowardice, and courage without wisdom is recklessness. That real leadership begins where ego ends. He reminded the Church that its mission is not to control, but to liberate. Not to wound, but to heal. Not to sit in judgment, but to walk in mercy.

The journeys he made would have exhausted men half his age. But he kept going—fueled not by ambition, but by faith. He made the world believe in miracles again. Not lightning bolt miracles, but quiet, persistent ones: a word of forgiveness. A public embrace. A softened heart. A table with room for everyone.

His death leaves a hollow space—not just in Rome, but in the lives of those who saw in him a reflection of what the Church could be. Not perfect, but present. Not powerful, but prophetic. Not above the people, but among them.

Francis was not chosen in the traditional sense. He was blessed to choose—to choose love over fear. To choose encounter over ideology. To choose wholeness in a world addicted to fracture.

And so I ask you—as Pope Francis so often did: Let us not be overcome by anger, suspicion, or division. In times of confusion, we are not called to inflame one another, but to encounter one another. With truth. With mercy. And with a desire for the common good.

Pope Francis taught us to build peace, not with slogans or scapegoats, but with real acts of humility, care for the poor and love for creation. May we all find the courage to listen more than accuse, to serve more than condemn, and to heal more than wound.

May God bless you—and guide us all. ✚